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/William R. Allen/

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June 17, 2008

Date

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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| Applicants: | Bogdan Radu et al. | Confirmation No.: | 4275 |
| Serial No.: | 10/710,276 | | |
| Filed: | June 30, 2004 | | |
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| Examiner: | Gregory J. Strimbu | | |
| Title: | MODULAR VEHICLE DOOR CONSTRUCTION | | |
| Atty Docket No.: | MASLIAC-44 | | |

Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

June 17, 2008

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RESPONSE

Sir:

This communication responds to the final Office Action mailed on March 17, 2008 and is being enclosed with a Request for Continued Examination submitted concurrently herewith. This communication represents a fully responsive submission, as required under 37 CFR § 1.114. Claims 1-3, 5, and 6 are pending. In view of the following remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in complete condition for allowance and request reconsideration of the application in this regard.

Claims 1-3, 5, and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,892,496 to Youngs et al. (hereinafter *Youngs*) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,571,515 to Samways et al. (hereinafter *Samways*). Claim 1 is the sole remaining independent claim subject to this rejection. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

In contrast to Applicants' independent claim 1, the combination of *Youngs* and *Samways* fail to disclose "a plurality of fasteners securing said door component to said carrier plate" and "said fasteners further securing said door component and said carrier plate to said door frame" with the additional recitation that the fasteners are "configured to initially support the door component on said carrier plate before said carrier plate is positioned between said door frame and said door trim panel in the assembly."

In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that *Samways* discloses "fasteners 16 securing the door component F to the carrier plate 1 as shown as figure 2, said fasteners 16 further securing the door component F and said carrier plate 1 to the door frame 2, and said fasteners 16 configured to initially support said door component F on said carrier plate 1 before said carrier plate is positioned on said door frame." However, this disclosure is not apparent in *Samways*. In fact, Figures 1 and 2 of *Samways* fail to even show the fasteners (16) that are used to fasten the carrier plate and door component to the door frame. The only Figures in *Samways* that actually show the fasteners (16) are assembled views, such as Figures 3 and 4, after the carrier plate (1) and door component F are assembled with the door frame. In fact, the absence of the fasteners (16) from the exploded views in Figures 1 and 2 is objective evidence that the fasteners (16) do not support initially the door component F on the carrier plate (1) before the carrier plate (10) is positioned on the door frame.

Youngs fails to remedy this deficiency of *Samways*. Specifically, no single plurality of fasteners (42, 58, 64) disclosed in *Youngs* satisfies all of the requirements set forth in Applicants' claim 1.

Youngs discloses push-fit fasteners (42) that secure the window regulator assembly (30) and the lock-latch assembly (32) with the carrier plate (16). *See* column 3, lines 53-55. As apparent in Fig. 1 of *Youngs*, the push-fit fasteners (42) are received in blind openings in the window regulator assembly (30) and the lock-latch assembly (32), which do not penetrate through the window regulator assembly (30) and the lock-latch assembly (32). Consequently, although the push-fit fasteners (42) arguably support the window regulator assembly (30) and the lock-latch assembly (32) on the carrier plate (16) before assembly, *Youngs* fails to disclose that the push-fit fasteners (42) secure the window regulator assembly (30) and the lock-latch assembly (32) with the door frame (12) in the assembly.

Youngs also discloses fasteners (58) that secure the carrier plate (16) with the door frame (12) in the assembly. *See* column 4, lines 35-39. However, the fasteners (58) do not support the

window regulator assembly (30) and the lock-latch assembly (32) to the carrier plate (16) either before or after assembly.

Youngs also discloses fasteners (64) that are used to secure the window regulator assembly (30) and the lock-latch assembly (32) with the door frame (12). *See* column 4, lines 43-46. However, the fasteners (64) do not secure the carrier plate (16) to the door frame (12), as set forth in claim 1. As explained at column 4, lines 43-67 of *Youngs*, the fasteners (64) for the window regulator assembly (30) fit in a notch (16A) in the carrier plate (16). The notch (16A) is intentionally present in the carrier plate (16) to “provide access to upper apertures 66 of the window regulator assembly 30.” Hence, the fasteners (64) inserted into the upper apertures (66) of the window regulator assembly (30) do not secure the carrier plate (16) to the door frame (12). Apertures (68) in the carrier plate (16) are “larger than the third fasteners 64” used to attach the lower portion of the window regulator assembly (30) to the door frame (12). *Youngs* states that these fasteners (64) “do not attach the window regulator assembly 30 to the door body 12.” Moreover, the lock-latch assembly (32) is attached to a side portion (13) of the door frame (12) using fasteners (64), which is outside of the footprint of the carrier plate (16). Hence, the fasteners (64) used to secure the lock-latch assembly (32) to a side portion (13) of the door frame (12) do not secure the carrier plate (16) to the door frame (12).

In addition, the fasteners (64) do not support the window regulator assembly (30) and the lock-latch assembly (32) on the carrier plate (16) before assembly. As explained in *Youngs*, the fasteners (64) are used to secure the window regulator assembly (30) and the lock-latch assembly (32) to the door body (12) only “[a]fter the carrier 16 has been attached to the door body 12.” *See* column 4, lines 43-46.

With regard to a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), a *prima facie* case of obviousness requires that the references teach or suggest all the claim limitations. In this instance, the combined disclosures of *Samways* and *Youngs* fail to disclose “a plurality of fasteners securing said door component to said carrier plate.” In addition, the combined disclosures of *Samways* and *Youngs* fail to disclose “said fasteners further securing said door component and said carrier plate to said door frame” with the additional recitation that the fasteners are “configured to initially support the door component on said carrier plate before said carrier plate is positioned between said door frame and said door trim panel in the assembly.” Accordingly, the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. For this reason alone, Applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Because claims 2, 3, 5, and 6 depend from independent claim 1, Applicants submit that these claims are also patentable. Furthermore, claims 2, 3, 5, and 6 each recite a unique combination of elements not disclosed or suggested by *Youngs*.

Conclusion

Applicants have made a bona fide effort to respond to each and every requirement set forth in the Office Action. In view of the foregoing remarks, this application is submitted to be in complete condition for allowance. Accordingly, a timely notice of allowance to this effect is earnestly solicited. If there is any additional matter that may be resolved by telephone or fax, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned to expedite issuance of this application.

Applicants do not believe that any fees are due in connection with this submission other than an RCE fee. However, if such petition is due or any fees are necessary, the Commissioner may consider this to be a request for such and charge any necessary fees to Deposit Account No. 23-3000.

Respectfully submitted,
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